Clean Up 'Disgusting Dirt' to Bring Shoppers Downtown

Demand for cleanup of downtown streets, described as "disgustingly dirty," will be the first shot fired in a campaign by the retail merchants group of Victoria Chamber of Commerce to attract more shoppers to the downtown area.

W. A. Laudrum, chairman, called at yesterday's regular meeting for suggestions from members to beat the lure of "new, fresh and sparkling" suburban shopping centres.

He said the downtown area is rapidly losing ground as the place to shop, and suggested adoption of a project for 1959 "something we can do as a group to build up the downtown area.

"We've got to make it exciting, an adventure for Mrs. Housewife to come and shop in the downtown area," he said.

The group decided to open the campaign with a letter to Mayor Scurrah demanding action on clean-up of downtown streets.

The issue was raised by Edgar A. Hobbs, chain store manager, who complained of "absolutely disgusting dirt on the streets."

The "worst offenders," he said, were banks whose employees did not work Saturdays and therefore did not sweep off the sidewalk. He also referred to certain drugstores, without naming any offenders.

"Saturday is the day when most people come downtown to shop, and its also the day the streets are dirtiest," Mr. Hobbs said.

Another suggestion which will be considered was to keep strings of ornamental lights burning every evening through the winter, and on Friday nights for late shopping throughout the year.

Mr. Laundrum proposed that each downtown merchant contribute $10 to a fund to help promote the downtown area. But the group decided to canvass its members for their reactions and for further suggestions.

LOCAL NEWS

The Daily Colonist.

(ESTABLISHED 1858)

CLASSIFIED

No. 38—101st YEAR | VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1959 | SECOND NEWS SECTION

Pensioners Budget In Fractions of Cents

Fifteen months ago the federal government raised its old age assistance payments to senior citizens from $46 to $55: today there are some 3,000 persons in Greater Victoria existing on this amount.

Colonist reporter Ted Shakleford has been assigned to live on $55 for a month to discover how these senior citizens live and what their problems are. Mr. Shakleford has no private telephone but will be available in The Daily Colonist office—EV 3-4111—between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. each night.

The person who faces a month with only $55 to provide food, shelter and the myriad costs of living has to count expenses in the fractions of pennies to get by.

Constant vigilance is the price of freedom from want, but there are a number of pamphlets and plenty of information available in Greater Victoria for anyone who seeks it.

Pamphlets such as Food Guide for the Older Person, Healthful Eating, Good Food for Older Persons, and sample menus can be obtained free of charge from Glen Hamilton, executive director of the Community Welfare Council; Bill Hooson, City Welfare Officer, and the provincial health department.

And there are a number of ways food can be bought cheaply, but with all this those fractions of pennies must still be watched with an eagle eye.

A low-cost diet, which is what I look like eating once my month begins, allows only 11.6 cents for breakfast . . . one ounce of rolled oats, 1 cent; four ounces of milk, half liquid milk and half powdered milk, 1.6 cents; one tablespoon of sugar, .3 cents; two slices of toast, 2.5 cents; three teaspoons of margarine, 1 cent; one ounce of jam, 1.2 cents; two cups of coffee, 2.8 cents, and one ounce of evaporated milk, 1.2 cents.

And of course, to the 11.6 cents must be added the cost of the electricity or gas used to make the coffee and the toast.

Fantastic? Far from it. Many of Greater Victoria's senior citizens are pinching their pennies this way.

Lunch, which might well include five cents worth of baked beans, two cents worth of coleslaw and a cents worth of dressing, reaches 21 cents and dinner is the luxury meal with meatballs made of four ounces of hamburger, a quarter of an egg, breadcrumbs and two tablespoons of milk. Dinner costs 35.1 cents.

These are practical figures. And it is possible to live healthily on meals such as these. A budget of 67.7 cents a day will give a senior citizen the food he or she needs.

For a single person, like myself, some 37 per cent must be added to the portions. On this basis my food bill for the month will hit a few cents more than $28.

Joan Groves, nutritionist with the provincial health department, has lived for three weeks on just such a diet—her daily budget about 69 cents a day or less.

From the investigation I have carried out, here's how I'll buy my food:

Bread will come from a bakery or a supermarket, one or two days old, and reduced to about 12 cents a loaf; meat will either be unpopular types such as pork liver, oxtail, brisket or tripe, or else it will come from the small amount of darkened meat which the average customer won't buy; vegetables will probably come from the city market; milk I already have, a three-pound carton of powdered milk.

If I can borrow some fishing tackle I'll try my luck off the breakwater some days. It might get me some free fish and give me something to do.

City Hall Staff Eat Haggis

Needing no persuasion to come back for second helping, city hall stenographer Terry Graham samples some more haggis with cashier John Ingram-Smith, who donated it for seventh successive year so city hall staff, eating in lunchroom, could mark birthday of Robert Burns.—(Colonist photo.)

Downtown Mall In Seattle, Too

Downtown Seattle, if not emulating Victoria, is at least thinking the same way. Paul W. Seibert, executive vice-president of the Central Association of Seattle, wrote Mayor Percy Scurrah yesterday that development of a pedestrian mall for several blocks in central Seattle had just been announced.

To Consolidate B.C. Needs

New Power Colossus Urged by Gregory

Formation of a new government-owned utility to generate all British Columbia power needs was urged in the legislature yesterday by George Gregory (Lib.-Victoria).

He suggested it be called B.C. Hydro and that it should develop the province's hydro resources in the most economical way and then sell the power to the B.C. Electric and the B.C. Power Commission.

SLOAN PRECEDENT

He said the new company could start with development of the Columbia and the Peace River and asked that the very best men be hired as leaders of the company. "And we should be willing to pay them," he said, and referred to precedent having been set by the $50,000 forestry adviser job filled by the late Hon. Gordon Sloan.

Mr. Gregory said he was not hitting at the B.C. power commissioners. "I think they have done their best, but you can't expect the very best from men who have already done their life's work," he said.

RATES TOO HIGH

He said that part of the trouble British Columbia has experienced in attracting industry is that "our power rates are too high." He thought under his B.C. Hydro plan and with the best engineers available power costs could be reduced.

Speaking in the Throne Speech debate, Mr. Gregory ranged over a number of subjects and touched on some points of the Sommers case, although he said he would reserve most of his comments until discussion on the attorney-general's department estimates when the attorney-general would be able to reply.

TWO QUESTIONS

He said there were two questions he wished the attorney-general to be ready to answer.

One was to tell who informed former lands and forests minister Robert Sommers of the charges made by Charles Eversfield and David Sturdy in Mr. Bonner's office.

The second was to tell when the attorney-general first became aware that Sommers had been taking money from Gray.

Mr. Gregory said only three people knew of the declaration made in Mr. Bonner's office by Charles Eversfield.

RATHER OBVIOUS

"It is rather obvious who told," he said. "So we have written into evidence of a civil case something given to the attorney-general, which got into the hands of a colleague who used it to try to get money."

Mr. Gregory referred to the time Robert Sommers rose in the House and said he had done nothing wrong.

"What has become of the long-established principle in the House that members speak just the truth and we all believe?" asked Mr. Gregory.

"I can think of no one better than the prime minister (Bennett) to repudiate the man," Mr. Gregory challenged.

PREMIER SILENT

But Premier Bennett said nothing. He turned his chair around so his back was facing Mr. Gregory as he had done through most of his speech.

"Unless he repudiates him we can no longer accept the fact that only the truth is spoken in this House," Mr. Gregory again challenged and the premier carried on with a conversation with Highways Minister Gaglardi.

At one point in his speech Mr. Gregory said he would like the premier during his trip to Ottawa to look up the Victoria MP there and "punch him in the nose for me." But Mr. Gregory didn't get a chance to outline his reasons.

NEVER BE RUDE

"I would never be rude to him or any other member," Premier Bennett said.

Mr. Gregory said "the time has come for both labor and management to settle their disputes in a less warlike manner than in the past."

He said the Labor Relations Act should be changed so a strike vote is a vote to go on strike. "I do not advocate compulsory arbitration except in essential services," he said.

IS IT TOO BIG?

Mr. Gregory struck out at the connection of the B.C. Electric with Wenner-Gren interests. "I can't help wondering if the B.C. Electric has not gotten too big for its own good and the public good," he said.

He said he wouldn't be surprised if shares in the Peace River Power Development Company, which cost Wenner-Gren 33 cents and the B.C. Electric $1, cost the general public $10 when they art put on the general market.

"Anyone who thinks Wenner-Gren is here for our good is thoroughly mistaken," he said.

$250,000

Struggle For Tax Goes On

City of Port Alberni, "loser" in a quarter-million dollar appeal court decision handed down in Victoria in a school tax case, is not letting the matter rest.

MacMillan & Bloedel Ltd. won an appeal against a demand for school taxes on company land at Port Alberni—a demand that could have cost the firm an extra $250,000 a year.

Port Alberni, which stands to lose this school tax on the basis of the decision, is seeking an appointment with Premier W. A. C. Bennett to discuss the tax structure which set off the matter.

If nothing is achieved in this manner, council feels it must carry an appeal of its own to the Supreme Court of Canada.

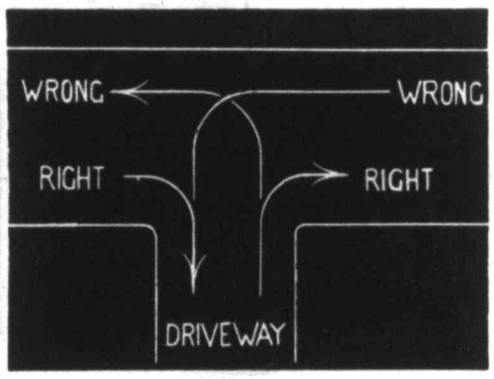
The situation arose from an agreement between the company and Port Alberni on assessments of $100,000 for company-owned land, and $700,000 for improvements constituting the huge sulphate pulp mill at the up-Island city.

This agreement was reached in a contract between company and city dated February, 1945, covering the years 1946 to 1965.

When, in 1957, the legislature amended the Assessment Equalization Act to provide "that lands and improvements should be assessed at their actual value," assessments on company land and improvements (the $27,000,000 mill) were increased to $351,540 and $31,742,954 respectively.

Result was a tax increase from $100,000 a year to $393,207 annually. This, the company claimed, was unlawful.

Grounds for allowing the appeal were not disclosed with court's decision, but will be handed down in written form later.



★ ★ ★

Lanes, Parking Lots

Wrong Left Turn Will Mean Ticket

In spite of warning signs, heavy rubber buttons set in the streets, and considerable shouting, many drivers fail to realize that in downtown Victoria any mid-block left turn is illegal.

The offence is committed scores of times daily, and because of its effect on traffic, city police are planning prompt and positive action.

From now on, any driver making any left turn in mid-block in the area from the north side of Herald to the south side of Humboldt, and from the west side of Cook to the west side of Wharf and Store, may expect a ticket, not a warning.

Police say worst tie-ups caused by infractions of this bylaw occur on the narrower, busy downtown streets, particularly Broad and View.

A car heading east on View, for instance, may decide to turn left into a parking lot between Douglas and Blanshard. The driver stops, waiting for west-bound traffic to clear. Behind him, other traffic piles up extending back into Douglas.

Similar instances occur on Broad, with cars turning into and out of parking lots, driveways or garages.

These streets are hardest hit, but the offence is committed daily on every street in the area.

Police say drivers must remember that except at intersections, in downtown Victoria, a right turn is the only right turn.

BB Gun Restriction Urged by Area PTA

Restriction of the sale and use of spring-type BB guns has been asked by the Victoria and District Parent-Teacher Council.

In a letter received at city hall yesterday, the council said it was asking Greater Victoria municipal councils to pass bylaws prohibiting sale of the pistols or guns to children under 14 years of age, and prohibiting their use on the streets or in public places, in view of the injuries and damage caused by them.

Restrictions already apply to air guns firing BB pellets, but the council said it could find no municipal or provincial legislation controlling the spring-actuated guns.

"This would be a step in the right direction," commented city police chief John Blackstock.

Around the Island

Hydros Pass Test Of Flood Control

NANAIMO—Proof of flood control by hydro-electric developments was provided during the heavy downpours in early December, Ed Marzocco, B.C. Power Commission coastal district superintendent, said yesterday.

While Alberni people were being evacuated from river bank homes, the hydro plant on the Puntledge River reduced a peak inflow of 21,814 cubic feet per second to a peak discharge of 8,500 cubic feet per second at the plant tailrace, he said.

On the Campbell River, a peak runoff of 50,000 cubic feet per second was reduced at John Hart plant to a maximum discharge of 19,000 cubic feet per second.

Total storage in the Campbell River reservoirs during the flood period was 32,000,000,000 gallons, sufficient water to cover a mile-square city 175 feet deep.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO—Intelligent voting by supporters of the labor movement would assure favorable consideration of briefs submitted by labor organizations.

This statement was made by Victoria Labor Council vice-president Ed Haw Sunday at a meeting of Nanaimo and District Labor Council.

He said the labor movement on the Island could expect little consideration of briefs on unemployment submitted to governments.

Earlier, Nanaimo council vice-president Arnold Smith said the briefs were a "waste of paper."

Council will continue to press for government action at all three levels on the unemployment position, however, and briefs will be presented within the next few weeks.

PARKSVILLE — Third annual staff seminar of the Canadian Labor Congress regional office and the B.C. Federation of Labor opened yesterday at Island Hall Hotel with about 50 labor men from all over British Columbia attending.

Director for the week-long seminar is Thomas Gooderham of Vancouver, regional director of the CLC. Sessions will deal with economic problems, CLC political activities, international affairs, attacks on organized labor and other problems.

Here from the University of California is John Hutchinson, co-ordinator of labor problems, who will speak on the future of American labor.

Max Swerdlow, national director of education from Ottawa, will lecture on education. Other speakers are Maurice Miller, director of research and planning department of natural resources, University of Saskatchewan; George Home, national political education director CLC, Vancouver; William Davies, president Saskatchewan Federation of Labor; Jack Williams, public relations director, CLC; Dr. William Black, Vancouver, regional liaison officer, Department of Citizenship and Immigration; Joe Miyazawa, assistant research director, IWA, and Joe Morris, president of district council, IWA.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO — A 13-year-old juvenile was sentenced to an indefinite term in Brannan Lake Industrial School yesterday by juvenile court judge Lionel Beevor-Potts.

The boy admitted entering three separate Nanaimo homes during the weekend. A 16-year-old boy was remanded for one week without plea on one charge of breaking and entering.

DUNCAN — Officers of the Duncan AOTS Club became female impersonators at the annual installation and put on a show that brought forth hilarious reactions from the large audience. In the audience were representatives of AOTS Clubs from Port Alberni, Esquimalt, Brechin and Chemainus.

The installation was held in the United Church Hall. D. C. Morton was master of ceremonies for the "Beauty Show." Installed as president was Douglas Greenwood; vice-president, Vincent Brookbank; secretary, Lorene McLeod; treasurer, Robert Johnson.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO—Ivor Tucker has been named B.C. Power Commission transmission supervisor for the coastal region. He succeeds Frank Cartwright, who has retired after 32 years as an electric utility man.

★ ★ ★

The B.C. Power Commission is investigating the feasibility of diverting water from Mohun Lake into the Campbell River system.

But in answer to an inquiry from Campbell River Fish and Game Club, the BCPC has promised to discuss the scheme with the federal fisheries department and the B.C. Game Commission before applying for a licence.

The power commission has previously built diversion works on the Quinsam, Salmon and Heber rivers to add to the output of the Campbell River hydro plants.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO — Annual meeting of the Nanaimo branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association will be held at the Health Centre Wednesday at 8 p.m.